



Bottom Line PERSONAL



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readersask

I have seen advertisements for **enhanced gemstones**. What are they?

Enhanced gemstones are lower-quality stones that have been modified to look better. Gemstones may be heated or even irradiated to enhance their color, or they can be partly filled with glass, dyed or drilled by a laser. These artificial enhancements of color and clarity often make a stone look better to the naked eye. These stones are worth less, not more, than ones sold after they have simply been mined and cut in their natural condition.

Caution: Unscrupulous dealers sometimes use enhanced stones to fool customers into thinking that they are getting high-quality gems at very low prices. **Self-defense:** Buy only from a reputable jeweler. Get an enhanced gemstone if you like the way it looks—but be sure the invoice specifies that it is enhanced and explains what was done. The Federal Trade Commission and the American Gem Trade Association require full disclosure of any enhancements. Reputable jewelers always will provide it in writing.

Answer from: Susan Eisen, Master Gemologist Appraiser, Accredited Senior Appraiser, El Paso, Texas, and author of *Crazy About Jewelry* (Full Circle International).

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